



# Early Childhood Development

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development  
Mary E. Switzer Building, 330 C Street, S.W. • Washington, DC 20201

## Latest From The Family Room Blog



### **Strengthening Our Investment in Working Families and Child Care**

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is partnering with the U.S. Department of Labor to highlight and address the challenges of finding affordable, high-quality child care.

*Continue reading.*



### **Ensuring Equal Access for All**

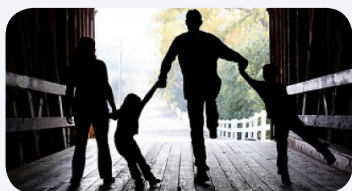
New Family Violence Prevention and Services Act regulations enhance access to domestic violence services for all survivors and their families. *Continue reading.*



### **The Role of Human Services Programs in Addressing Domestic Violence**

We're encouraging all human services providers to work to end domestic violence.

*Continue reading.*



### **New Americans and the Affordable Care Act**

This act helps ensure that immigrants and refugees have accessible, affordable, and quality health care. *Continue reading.*

*Continued on page 2*

## A Message From Linda K. Smith



As this year draws to an end, it is a wonderful time to reflect on what we have accomplished and what we want to prioritize for the future. Much has been accomplished over the last decade to improve the quality of early care and education (ECE) programs. The nearly nationwide implementation of quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) has given ECE programs a pathway to higher levels of quality and parents a vehicle to identify those programs that have achieved the highest levels. The improvements brought about by the 2014 reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the new subsequent Child Care and Development Fund

program regulations have laid a true foundation for quality. The changes to Head Start programs, including the increased number of degreed teachers; introduction of competition to the grant process; and new, significantly revised performance standards, have helped define Head Start quality as the goal for all programs.

Significant work has been done to understand the workforce, and we now understand just how underpaid our early care and education workforce really is. The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, set new goals for both education and competence. Finally, the 275 Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grants have helped bridge a once-wide schism between these two programs and have given us insight into just what it costs to do early learning programs right.

So, where do we go from here? One thing we know is that *quality costs more than most parents can afford to pay*. We have a gap, and the lower the family's income, the bigger the gap; it's that simple. From my perspective, we have "hit the wall," and there isn't much more that can be done to improve access to quality until—and unless—we figure out how we pay for the quality that our children deserve without passing the costs on to parents.

It is time to put on our collective "thinking caps" and to figure this out. This week, NASEM is launching a study of the financing of early care and education with the support of both the public and philanthropic sectors. The NASEM committee will study how to fund early care and education programs for children from birth to kindergarten entry in ways that are accessible, affordable to families, and high quality, including a well-qualified and adequately supported ECE workforce consistent with the findings from the previous NASEM study on that workforce. Specifically, the committee will explore the following questions:

- In most States the cost of high-quality early learning programs exceeds the cost of college tuition, making it unaffordable for lower income families. What changes need to be made to the funding structure of early care and education in order to ensure sufficient funds are available to support a quality of care that is consistent with the science of child development?

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## Have you been to our Web site recently?

Learn more about the Office of Early Childhood Development:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd>.

## The Family Room Blog

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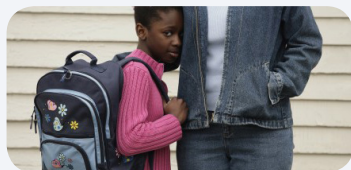
### **Re-envisioning Child Care to Work Better for Children and Parents**

The Nation is turning a page in the history of child care with new requirements for the Child Care and Development Fund program. *Continue reading.*



### **Celebrate Lights On Afterschool on October 20**

ACF recognizes the importance of afterschool to children and families. *Continue reading.*



### **Brain Science Research: Implications for Human Services Delivery**

This blog is based on a speech for the Disrupting the Poverty Cycle conference. *Continue reading.*



### **Supportive Housing Can Help Keep Families Together**

Five sites are looking at how combining affordable rent and support services can help keep families in safe, stable homes. *Continue reading.*



### **New Tribal Home Visiting Program Grant Awards**

These grant awards honor families and cultures and provide inspiration for generations to come. *Continue reading.*

*Continued from page 1*

- What are the implications for families of varying levels of costs relative to income, and how can a reasonable share for families be determined?
- What funding mechanisms at the Federal, State, and local levels have been effective at creating a strong element of support for the workforce?
- What promising funding mechanisms at the Federal, State, and local levels warrant further examination through a systematic approach to implementing and evaluating at scale?
- What other workforce development considerations at the national, State, and local levels affect the effective implementation of these funding mechanisms?
- What frameworks or tools can support national, State, and local systems to develop funding mechanisms that are most likely to be effective?



During the initial phase of the study, the NASEM committee will gather information and will review available evidence on funding mechanisms across early care and education settings and on illustrative examples of strategies that have promise. *This is where you come in.* In nearly every State and within many major cities, we have examples of what works and what doesn't. Now is your time to share information with the committee and to ensure that its members have the most complete picture of what has been tried to produce a report that can truly guide this national discussion. You can contact the NASEM committee via [this Web link](#) for more information on how to submit feedback.

In closing and as we move into the next Administration, we need a clear focus on the cost of early care and education and ways to ensure that all families, regardless of income, have access to a reasonable quality ECE program. The President-elect has singled out child care as a national priority. We all applaud that increased focus. His proposals have called for increases in tax credits, tax incentives, and paid maternity leave, all of which are important but not enough. As I always say, *there is no single solution to a complex problem*, and child care is nothing if not complex. Although tax credits in particular are an important tool—one that will help middle-income families most—the problem is more complex. Low-income working families simply do not have the money to pay the cost in advance for high-quality care and then wait for the tax credits. So, in addition to tax solutions, we need to increase direct funding for the Child Care and Development Fund program. This policy will allow States to provide child care vouchers to low-income families and will allow those families to purchase stable, quality care—whether through a center or a family child care home.

Although a lot has been done for the ECE workforce to understand the cost of quality, and we now have clear goals for what we need to do, the biggest mountain has yet to be climbed—how to pay for it.

Happy Holidays,

Linda K. Smith

Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Early Childhood Development, ACF







## From the Office of Head Start

### Health Insurance Marketplace Open Enrollment

The Health Insurance Marketplace 2017 Open Enrollment runs from November 1, 2016, through January 31, 2017. Enroll by December 15, 2016, for coverage starting on January 1, 2017. After January 31, you can enroll in 2017 health insurance only if you qualify for a [Special Enrollment Period](#). See all [Marketplace dates and deadlines](#).

Dr. Blanca Enriquez, Director of the Office of Head Start, has written [a letter](#) to Head Start colleagues and interested parties. She reminds us of the vital role that Head Start programs can play in making sure that families and staff members learn how to find and apply for affordable insurance. Access to affordable health insurance is vital to ensuring that children are healthy and ready to learn.

The Marketplace is for people without health coverage. If you don't have health insurance through a job, Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, or another source of [qualifying health coverage](#), the Marketplace can help you get covered.

- **If you have job-based insurance:** You can buy a Marketplace plan, but you'll pay full price unless your job-based insurance doesn't meet certain standards. However, most job-based plans do.
- **If you have Medicare:** You can't switch to Marketplace insurance, use a Marketplace plan as a supplement, or buy a Marketplace dental plan. Learn more about [Medicare and the Marketplace](#).

Find tips and factsheets to guide you and to share with families on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center Web site.

- [The Affordable Care Act: Tip Sheet for Programs](#)
- [10 Ways Your Head Start Program Can Promote New Health Insurance Opportunities](#)
- [Head Start and Early Head Start Health Insurance Questions: Medicaid and Me](#)
- [Need Affordable Health Coverage? \(Flyer\)](#)



## Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Highlight

### The Kawerak Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership: An Innovative Approach to Professional Development in Remote Alaska

Kawerak, Inc., housed the Uiviilat Play and Learn Center in Nome, Alaska, for many years prior to being awarded an Early Head Start – Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grant in 2015. The center employed 12 teachers who transitioned into the new program. Jessica Farley, Program Director, explained that there weren't enough existing staff, though, to implement the grant. "We needed more teachers because the ratios were lower to have one teacher for every four children. So we recruited in our community. Nome is an isolated area, only accessible by air. It is 539 air miles from Anchorage. Because of its isolation, we weren't able to recruit anyone who already met the [requirements](#), including the minimum infant-toddler child development associate (CDA) credential for teaching staff."

So, the center instituted a training program starting 6 months into the 18-month startup period that was extended to newly awarded EHS-CC Partnership grantees. The training program consisted of 1 week of intensive CDA training along with online training modules, a CDA training book, and participation in conferences with a CDA track to meet the 120-training-hour requirement for the credential. The grantee worked with the Office of Head Start training and technical assistance specialist to develop training plans for each teacher to monitor their training-hour progress.

"We closed for a week and hired a trainer who flew in and helped staff [members] through their CDA portfolios. The portfolio is the most difficult component of the CDA process; by flying in a trainer, our staff [members] were finished in a week's time." The trainer also trained the program's Education Coordinator, Steffanie Edson, to host a similar intensive training event in the future, building Kawerak's internal organizational capacity.

Once the training hours and portfolios were completed, the teachers had to go through a verification process. One of the biggest barriers to helping staff obtain the required qualifications was that there were no CDA professional development (PD) specialists in Nome to conduct the verification visits. Furthermore, flying them in was costly and difficult to coordinate. To overcome this challenge, the program trained some local candidates who met the criteria for the professional development specialist position, so they were able to do the onsite reviews with the teachers.

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## Family Engagement



### Journeys of Hope and Courage: Using Storytelling Approaches To Partner With Families

Watch this series of documentary-style videos about the power of storytelling. Explore and discover the impact of hearing stories about a family(ies) when working toward positive outcomes for families and children. Learn best practices and useful strategies for genuine conversations from an example of the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) program.

The videos are available in English and Spanish, and the series topics include the following:

- *A Storytelling Point of View:* Watch an MSHS program staff member interview families about their personal experiences as migrant workers in the United States.
- *The Storytelling Technique:* Begin building relationships with families through the use of storytelling.
- *The Importance of Listening:* Learn more about how listening, body language, and eye contact can help encourage families to share their stories.

### Tell Me a Story

Learn how reading stories with social and emotional themes can be used by early care and education staff members and parents to explore important topics. Use books to help children manage strong emotions, deal with feelings of grief, or work on social skills.



## Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Highlight

*Continued from page 3*

The task of meeting the EHS-CC Partnership teacher qualifications requires a lot of commitment and hard work. In recognition of this, a critical recruitment strategy for Kawerak was using Partnership funds to increase the starting salary for EHS-CC Partnership teachers. Jessica says “the goal is increasing quality and increasing salaries. We’ve had very little turnover since making that decision. Before, turnover was a constant 80%–90% each year, but only a few have left since implementing the Partnership model.” She credits increased salaries and reduced classroom ratios as the biggest reasons for the improved retention.

PD efforts don’t stop once teaching personnel have received their CDAs. The program has instituted monthly trainings in partnership with the local college, the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. As part of an ongoing relationship, the college donated the use of its space, computer labs, and resources to allow staff to earn the CDAs. Now that they have earned their CDAs, some teachers are working



toward their college degree through this partnership. The college has conducted cohort classes for about 4 years, moving teachers through the early childhood education associate degree program.

In reflecting on what the EHS-CC Partnership has meant in Nome, Jessica concludes that “the Partnership program is great for families. It offers long-term, secure, affordable child care in communities. I only have anecdotal evidence because we’re a small program, but our parents are getting employed, getting promoted, and getting better jobs because child care is no longer a barrier. Our staff [members] have a lot to be proud of. They are working very hard.”

## New Head Start Program Performance Standards

Introducing the New Head Start Program Performance Standards Webcast



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has announced new Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) that will further improve and strengthen the Head Start program. The regulation is the first comprehensive revision of the HSPPS since they were originally published in 1975. The updated standards reflect current research, science, and best practices. They describe high-quality service delivery so that Head

Start is better able to focus on outcomes for children and families, reduce administrative and regulatory burdens, and improve clarity and transparency.

The *new HSPPS and related resources* are now available *with the Appendix and in Spanish* and on the *Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center* site, including:

- *Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) Final Rule—ACF-PI-HS-16-04*
- The *HSPPS with the Appendix in English and Spanish (español)*
- *General Fact Sheet* from the Office of Head Start (OHS)
- *Questions and answers* about the release of the new HSPPS
- A *blog from Dr. Blanca Enriquez*, Director of OHS
- The *on-demand webinar* that introduced the new regulations.

A webinar, *Introducing the Head Start Program Performance Standards Webcast*, was presented by OHS. It is now available to watch on-demand. Topics for the webinar included:

- An overview of the new HSPPS
- A description of supports that OHS will offer grantees as they implement these standards.



## New Tribal Home Visiting Program Video

Listen to members of the Tribal Home Visiting Program describe in detail what it means to be a part of that program.

This [new Tribal Home Visiting Program video](#) provides information about the Federal Tribal Home Visiting Program. Representatives from five Tribal Home Visiting Program grantees discuss how the program has affected their community and the children and families they serve. In addition, grantees offer community context about the importance of home visiting. This video features families enrolled in the home visiting program, parent educators, and program coordinators.



## RTT-ELC and PDG Highlights

### Video Library Supports Quality Early Intervention Practices

The New Mexico Family Infant Toddler (FIT) Program and the Early Childhood Learning Network of the University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability have launched a new [FIT FOCUS Video Library](#) to provide illustrations of evidence-based and recommended early intervention practices in New Mexico.

The first video, [Using Video to Enhance Family Support and Reflective Practice](#), features an early intervention practitioner who discusses how she used video to enhance her services and to reflect on her practices.

The second video, [Families Front and Center: The Power of Coaching](#), shows a developmental vision specialist describing and illustrating how she used video recordings of her early intervention home visits as a foundation for self-reflection, the refinement of her practices, and her shift to using coaching in her practice with families.

The FIT Program is using video as part of its FOCUS Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, where early intervention practitioners and supervisors

use video as part of a reflective coaching process to promote quality early intervention practices. New videos will be added during the coming months. The FIT FOCUS Video Library is funded by the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant.

### ESSA Guidance for Early Learning

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) released nonregulatory guidance information to help ensure that young children from birth through third grade get the strong start they need to achieve success in school and life. This is ED's first comprehensive look at how the Nation's new education law supports our youngest learners.

President Obama signed the bipartisan [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA) into law in December 2015 to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and to replace key requirements of the outdated No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. For the first time, ESSA includes provisions to promote coordination in early learning among local communities; align preschool with early elementary school; and build the capacity of teachers, leaders, and others serving young children to provide the highest quality early learning opportunities.

Find the ESSA nonregulatory guidance information via [this Web link](#).

## ACF Helps Families With Heating Costs

Last month States received just over \$3 billion in funding that will help low-income families cover their energy bills, stay warm during winter months, and stay cool during summer months; it will also help families make cost-effective home energy repairs.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which is run by the Office of Community Services, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides funding to States, the District of Columbia, Territories, and Tribes to assist households in paying energy bills and to weatherize homes for energy improvements.

LIHEAP funding assists households in meeting home energy needs, including vulnerable households with very young

children, individuals with disabilities, and older individuals. Those interested in applying for energy assistance should contact their State, Territory, Tribal, or local [LIHEAP agency](#) or call (866) 674-6327.

The complete list of funds available to States and Territories can be seen via [this document](#), and those available for Tribes can be seen via [this document](#).



## Strengthening Our Investment in Working Families and Child Care

Rachel Schumacher, Director of the Office of Child Care



In the Office of Child Care, we know that investing in expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care not only supports the economic stability of low-income working families but also grows our national economy overall.

We also know that it is difficult for many families to pay for high-quality child care. Too many parents still struggle with a choice between the economic security of work and the security of knowing that their children are in a safe and nurturing child care setting. Although the median income for families in this country is just over \$55,000 a year, the average cost of infant child care is \$10,000 a year—a price that rivals in-State college tuition in the majority of States in the country. This is an equation that does not work for the future of families, employers, or our Nation's economy as a whole.

We're excited to join the [U.S. Department of Labor to kick off a national conversation](#) about how we can further strengthen our investment in working families and child care. Our partnership is helping us highlight links among our national economic security, family employment, and affordable access to high-quality child care. We hope you will share your story and [tell us what affordable child care means to you](#).

New data suggest how big the challenges around finding affordable, high-quality care really are. Recently, I [spoke about this challenge with National Public Radio](#) (NPR). We talked about



a recent poll conducted by NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Their findings highlight the challenges that parents of young children face in finding and paying for high-quality child care.

What was also interesting was that although parents reported that cost was the most significant hurdle in accessing high-quality care, they also overwhelmingly reported that they believe that their children benefit once in care. Parents are backed up by decades of brain science research that also tells us how high-quality child care supports development.

Read the full article via [this Web link](#) at the [The Family Room Blog](#).

## Jumpstart: Read for the Record Event



On October 27, millions of children and adults gathered around the country to learn, laugh, and read *The Bear Ate Your Sandwich*, by Julia Sarcone-Roach, as part of the world's largest shared reading experience.

Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration

for Children and Families (ACF); Marsha

Basloe, Senior Advisor, ACF; leaders from the U.S. Department of Education, AmeriCorps, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and others joined Abby R. Weiss, Chief Program Officer, at the Washington, D.C., event. Our ACF Head Start children arrived in time to hear *The Bear Ate Your Sandwich* and to enjoy a snack. We thank Donalee Hinds, Head Start Center Director, for having her young children share this day.



Linda K. Smith, ACF, and Donalee Hinds, Head Start Center Director



Abby R. Weiss; James Cole, Jr.; and Linda K. Smith





## From OPRE

### Cultural Responsiveness

To support Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) offices and grantees in their quest to better serve diverse populations, the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE)-funded National Research Center on Hispanic Children and Families has developed resources that build on and extend the information and principles discussed in two briefs released by OPRE/ACF in April 2014 (*Enhancing Cultural Competence in Social Service Agencies* and *Survey Data Elements to Unpack Diversity of Hispanic Populations*). The resources below aim to inform and promote more culturally responsive services from ACF grantees and potential grant applicants by presenting national statistics, guiding community agencies in using public data, and connecting agencies to additional resources to support their efforts to increase the responsiveness and effectiveness of services for underserved populations.

### Data To Better Understand the Needs and Experiences of Hispanic Children and Families in the United States

*A National Portrait of Hispanic Children in Need*

*The Changing Geography of Hispanic Children and Families*

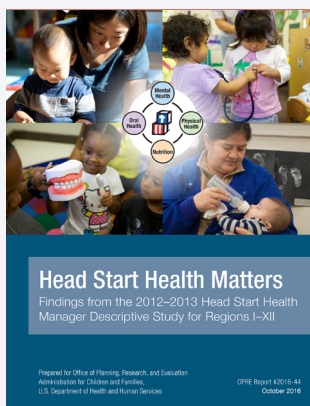
*The Complex and Varied Households of Low-Income Hispanic Children*

*Family Structure and Family Formation among Low-Income Hispanics in the U.S.*



### Tracking Trends of Quality and Teacher Characteristics in Head Start Classrooms

What can data from the Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey tell us about trends in observed classroom quality and selected teacher characteristics between 2006 and 2014? Explore [this report](#) to discover findings about these trends.



### Understanding Health-Related Activities and Programming in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

To date, little has been known about the activities and insights of Head Start and Early Head Start health managers, who coordinate services for more than 1 million enrolled children each year. The *2012–2013 Head Start Health Manager Descriptive Study* explores the context and delivery of health-related activities and programming in Head Start and highlights health managers' needs.



### Using Behavioral Science To Improve Indiana's Child Care Subsidy Program

How can behavioral interventions affect parents' child care decisionmaking and the child care subsidy redetermination process? Explore [this study](#) from the Behavioral Interventions To Advance Self-Sufficiency project and Indiana Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning.



### Understanding and Comparing State TANF Policies

How have welfare rules changed over time in a particular State? How do rules in different States compare? [This publication](#) uses data from the Welfare Rules Databook to provide tables containing key Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program policies for each State as of July 2015.

## Early Childhood Workforce

### Portland State Offers Free Tuition for Oregonians

Portland State University (PSU) announced a new program debuting next year that provides 4 years of free tuition and fees for some in-State freshmen.

The *Four Years Free program* will debut in fall 2017 and will go to students who have a 3.4 high school grade point average (GPA), apply for Federal student aid, are eligible for the Federal Pell Grant, and accept other Federal and State grants. The program would cover tuition and fees for as many as 15 credits per semester, which is estimated to save students \$8,400 a year.

Students who receive the Four Years Free award can keep receiving it throughout their undergraduate education (as many as 12 consecutive terms of enrollment) by maintaining a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA, remaining eligible for the Pell Grant, and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid application each year by February 1.

For a student who receives the maximum Pell Grant award, as well as the State's Opportunity Grant, the difference would cost the university about \$270 a student. However, if a student doesn't receive the maximum Federal or State grants, PSU will cover the difference. In fall 2016, about 12,550 PSU students were awarded Pell Grants.

Those students who receive the Four Years Free award can continue in the program as long as they maintain a 2.0 GPA and remain eligible for the Pell Grant. The program is only available to full-time PSU students but not to those students who were co-admitted to a community college.

### Dual-Language Learners: Strategies for Successful Opportunities in ECE

Penn State Better Kid Care (BKC) partnered with research scientists Nicole Gardner-Neblitt, Ph.D., and Ximena Franco, Ph.D., from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, to develop an online professional development (PD) module for early care



and education (ECE) professionals to support children in their care who are learning more than one language. The module provides an overview of the cognitive, social-emotional, and language development of dual-language learners (DLLs) and examples of how early childhood professionals can support children with instructional strategies. Through the content, videos, and reflection assignments, professionals identify ways to support DLLs in their own care settings. The module emphasizes the advantages of bilingualism, including the executive functioning, cognitive, and linguistic benefits of learning two or more languages.

In addition, the module presents information about the importance of building strong home-school partnerships and highlights several strategies that teachers can use to support children's native language. Downloadable resources to support teacher practices, such as *The Family Languages and Interests Interview* and *Book Reading Strategies*, facilitate the application of information presented in the module.

To access the module, go to [this Web site](#), create a free account, and select *Dual Language Learners: Strategies for Successful Opportunities in ECE*; the module content is available at no cost. If you need a certificate of completion, a nominal (\$5) fee is charged. BKC online PD is approved for PD credit in many States. See the status of module approval in your State via [this Web link](#).

For additional information, contact Claudia Mincemoyer, Ph.D., Director, Penn State Better Kid Care, via [this e-mail address](#).

### Virtual Lab School and Ohio State University Collaborate To Support Career Pathways for ECE Professionals

Professionals working in military ECE settings will soon be able to take advantage of new support for their career pathways, thanks to a partnership between the Virtual Lab School (VLS) and Ohio State University (OSU).

The *Virtual Lab School*, a comprehensive online PD system developed by a team at [Ohio State University](#), led by Dr. Cynthia Buettner, is the result of a collaboration among OSU, the [Office of the Secretary of Defense](#), and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). Initially created to provide PD and training to the nearly 30,000 professionals working in military child and youth ECE, the *VLS* online content is also available to the public.

The VLS system consists of five distinct tracks for center-based professionals, covering best practices for working with children from birth to age 12 in direct-care settings. The three direct-care provider tracks are designed for teachers caring for infants and toddlers from birth to age 3, preschool teachers caring for children from ages 3 to 5, and school-age staff members caring for children from ages 5 to 12. The two additional center-based tracks are administratively focused, with a track for training and curriculum specialists (coaches) and a track for program managers and directors. Each track consists of 15 core content courses, which include the 13 Functional Areas of the Child Development Associate competency standards. The VLS uses a relationship-based coaching model, which pairs the online content with opportunities for both reflective practice and supervision between learners and their coaches. The VLS is also developing a track for family child care providers and a specialized topics course to enhance teachers' and caregivers' own social-emotional learning; both of these will become available in 2017.

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## Research Connections

Child Care & Early Education

*Research Connections* regularly reviews its latest acquisitions and identifies reports and journal articles of high policy relevance.

### Research Findings

*How does the Shape School Task work to assess executive functions in preschoolers?*

*How can we measure and understand the mechanisms through which early childhood interventions impact later well-being?*

*Is a community-based, tribally delivered oral health promotion intervention effective at promoting oral health outcomes in Navajo children attending Head Start?*

*What indicators of quality are associated with positive child outcomes for students with and without disabilities in a full-inclusion public preschool program?*

*Do the low scores for basic caregiving in infant-toddler child care settings reflect the absence of basic health practices or challenges with the scoring procedures and quality standards of the instrument?*

*What factors is research identifying as predictors of retention for child care workers?*

*What are the challenges facing gay and lesbian families in preschool environments?*

*What is the relationship of preschool children's sleep to the association between negative emotionality and both peer acceptance and peer rejection?*



## From the Office of Child Care

On September 30 the Office of Child Care (OCC) released new final regulations for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program. In 2014 Congress reauthorized the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act and made sweeping changes to the law. The CCDBG Act of 2014 was not explicit in how many of the provisions applied to Tribes, and therefore, the Final Rule offers flexibility

to Tribes in certain areas where there are unique needs. The Final Rule is the result of several months of consultation on the new law and the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking with Tribes as well as past consultations and Tribal listening sessions. The requirements in the Final Rule focus on the importance of health and safety and high-quality child care.

OCC is committed to outreach with our CCDF Tribal grantees on the new Final Rule. We are currently conducting Regional calls with Tribes to provide an overview of the new regulations and to give opportunities for discussion and questions. Later this month, we are beginning a webinar series that will feature monthly webinars focusing on specific CCDF policy topics and State, Territory, and Tribal experiences. Stay tuned and look for OCC announcements on these webinars as well as some upcoming indepth webinars specifically for Tribes. In addition, we would like to highlight several resources on the OCC Web site for Tribes:

- [An Overview of How the Final Rule Impacts Tribes](#)
- [CCDF Final Rule Webinar for Tribes](#)
- [CCDF Final Rule for Tribes Slides](#)



## Early Childhood Workforce

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Recognizing the interest in and importance of supporting the ECE workforce in obtaining degreed credentials, OSU developed an online Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree in early childhood development and education in 2016. OSU also identified a valuable opportunity to capitalize on the relationship-based coaching model embedded in the VLS. Military-affiliated ECE professionals who complete VLS course work, with support

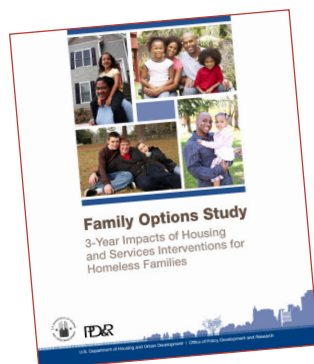
and oversight from their trainer, coach, or supervisor, will be able to count their VLS course completion as credit hours toward the online A.A. degree at Ohio State.

To learn more about the A.A. degree at Ohio State, contact Kia McKinnie ([mckinnie.4@osu.edu](mailto:mckinnie.4@osu.edu)), Associate Director of Undergraduate Recruitment for the College of Education and Human Ecology, OSU.

Additional information about the VLS is available from Dr. Buettner ([buettner.16@osu.edu](mailto:buettner.16@osu.edu)), Associate Professor in the Department of Human Sciences, College of Education and Human Ecology, OSU.

If you're looking for information on the early childhood workforce, visit the [Early Educator Central](#) site, which was launched as a repository of PD resources and opportunities to promote the PD efforts and credentials of infant-toddler teachers. All the resources were developed through the public domain.

## Early Childhood Homelessness



### Family Options Study

Three-year findings from a major study released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Abt Associates show that long-term housing subsidies, particularly housing vouchers, are the best strategy. Providing homeless families with priority access to long-term housing subsidies helps keep families from becoming homeless again and has a variety of positive benefits, including keeping families out of shelters and off the street, preventing food insecurity and intimate partner violence, and reducing school moves for children in homeless families.

With HUD support, Abt is continuing to track this sample of deeply poor families with histories of homelessness. You can read the report at [this Web site](#).

### Dr. Mary Haskett Receives the Dr. Staci Perlman Achievements in Research Award

Over the years, the annual National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) awards have become a key mechanism by which NAEHCY can recognize colleagues for their outstanding service provided to children and youths experiencing homelessness. Award recipients are selected through a screening and selection process overseen by a dedicated committee of State coordinators and other experts in the field. Award winners are recognized at a special ceremony held during the NAEHCY Annual Conference.

Mary Haskett, a Professor of Psychology at North Carolina State University, has been doing research on childhood development for more than 25 years, and her experiences highlight a real and growing mental health crisis facing homeless children. Dr. Haskett leads the

*Pictured from left to right: John McLaughlin, Grace Whitney, Barbara Duffield, Mary Haskett, Joe Willard, and Marsha Basloe.*



NC State Family Studies lab, which is committed to using research findings to inform social policy related to family well-being. She supervises graduate students who collaborate to conduct research, building the research field and helping budding researchers explore these topics.

### Early Childhood Shelter Initiative in Western North Carolina

The Early Childhood Shelter Initiative (ECSI) is a collaborative effort between the homeless education programs of Asheville city schools and Buncombe County schools in Western North Carolina. ECSI was created to enable homeless shelters in our community to create safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate shelter environments for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

ECSI works with the McKinney Vento program, Title I, homeless shelters, early childhood programs, the [Junior League of Asheville](#), AmeriCorps, and other entities. Together, they identify preschoolers, ensure access to early education, provide community resources, and support the strong development of young children experiencing homelessness.

Homeless shelters that serve families and children are not always equipped to meet the needs of young children. Because many of these young children will spend substantial time in these shelters, they are at risk of facing adverse situations that can negatively affect their development. Shelters are often limited with regard to the resources needed to mitigate these factors, but local homeless liaisons are in a perfect position to help shelters consider the needs of young children. ECSI identified four main focus areas for this initiative: (1) shelter support, (2) enrichment and education, (3) parent education and support, and (4) data collection.

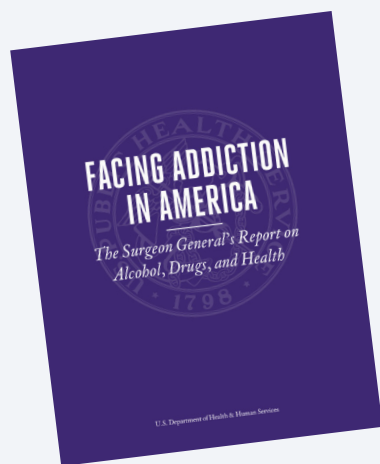
ECSI focuses on creating an environment in shelters that considers policy and law, training and engagement, evidence-based best practices, trauma-informed care, programming, school readiness, and sustainability. All these components rely on myriad professions and input from experts in the community. ECSI also hopes to create measurable outcomes to track future success and to use data to improve program development and capacity.

The Administration for Children and Families' [Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters](#) is one of the major cornerstones of ECSI. This tool will help guide shelters to recognize their strengths and will promote a healthy early childhood environment. Based on the assessment's results, ECSI suggests strategies to increase early childhood resources and support and to create a trauma-informed, child-centered shelter setting. In addition, ECSI is creating a network of support to connect shelters, families, and their children to resources in the community that will be sustainable and ongoing, even after a family finds housing.

For more ECSI information, contact Christine Craft, Homeless Liaison/Youth in Transition Coordinator at [christine.craft@bcsemail.org](mailto:christine.craft@bcsemail.org).







## Surgeon General Issued Landmark Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health

A new Surgeon General's report finds that alcohol and drug misuse and severe substance use disorders, commonly called addiction, are among America's most pressing public health concerns. Nearly 21 million Americans—more than the number of people who have all cancers combined—suffer from substance use disorders.

The report, *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health*, marks the first time that a U.S. Surgeon General has dedicated a report to substance misuse and related disorders. The report addresses alcohol, illicit drugs, and prescription drug misuse, with chapters dedicated to neurobiology, prevention, treatment, recovery, health systems integration, and recommendations for the future. It provides an indepth look at the science of substance use disorders and addiction, calls for a cultural shift in the way that Americans talk about the issues, and recommends actions we can take to prevent and treat these conditions and to promote recovery.

Welcome to *Milestones in Action* - a FREE library of photos and videos of developmental milestones.



## CDC Releases—Milestones in Action

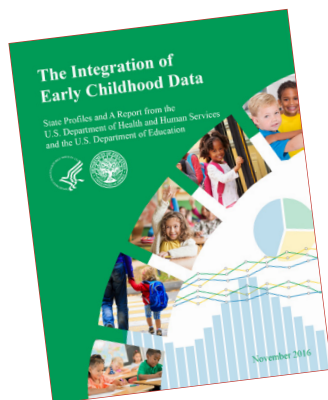
### Parents and Caregivers

You can click on an age above to see photo and video examples of important developmental milestones. This library can be used as an aid in completing the milestones checklist for your child's age. To see these photos and videos with milestones checklists, please visit [this Web site](#).

### Professionals

No permissions are needed to use the photos and images in this library for educational or awareness-building purposes.

## New Report From the Early Learning Interagency Policy Board on the Integration of Data



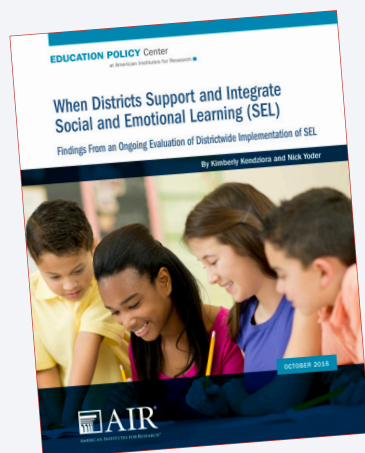
The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED) released a [joint report](#) that will help States refine their capacity to use existing data from early childhood (EC) programs to improve services for young children and families. The report covers key considerations when States integrate data and highlights progress in eight States that are actively developing and using EC integrated data systems (ECIDS). It also discusses technical assistance, includes resources available to States for ECIDS development, and reflects on lessons learned from additional States when approaching this work.

The report highlights examples of these issues in specific States, including:

- Minnesota's process for engaging stakeholders
- Georgia's use of data from its integrated system
- North Carolina's progress in integrating Head Start data
- Maryland's work to improve and integrate child care data
- Pennsylvania's integration of EC special education data (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], Part C and Part B, Section 619)
- Utah's efforts to link health data with early learning data
- Rhode Island's efforts to link universal screening data with other early learning data
- Oregon's development of a registry for the early learning workforce.

HHS and ED encourage States to continue to build their capacity to use data to answer key policy questions, improve program quality, meet children's diverse needs, and ultimately ensure that our Nation's youngest learners are more prepared to reach their full potential. You can also see the report at [this Web site](#).

## Additional Resources



### Social and Emotional Learning

A new [brief](#) on social and emotional learning (SEL) notes that SEL is increasingly accepted by educators and researchers as a process to cultivate life skills that foster personal development, academic achievement, and a more empathic school climate. SEL has been integrated into classes and has been taught in many schools, but the challenge for educators and policymakers is to better understand the most effective strategies for districtwide implementation.

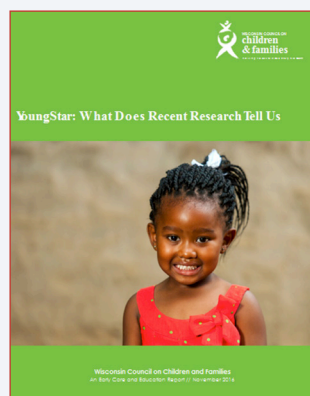
Based on findings from this study and others, even modest investments in SEL can pay off for individuals, schools, and society.



### Child Care Deserts

The Center for American Progress (CAP) undertook an analysis of child care centers by ZIP Code in eight States. The cost of quality child care is well documented, but less attention is given to the persistent undersupply of child care centers.

See the report by CAP at [this Web site](#).



### YoungStar: What Does Recent Research Tell Us

This [report](#) looks through the lens of the key objectives for YoungStar. The report reviews research on quality rating and improvement systems, examines lessons learned from the Wisconsin YoungStar validation study, and discusses the implications for the future of YoungStar.

### Communications

The Early Childhood Leadership Commission (ECLC) shared the *Early Childhood Communication Efforts in Colorado* report, which was developed through the work of the Early Childhood Communications Collaborative that examines communication efforts and strategies aimed at parents and caregivers in Colorado.

The full report, along with all the resource documents and appendices, can be found on the [ECLC Web site](#).

### Head Start in the South

All Head Start programs are required to submit annual program information reports to the Federal Office of Head Start.

*A Portrait of Head Start in the South* draws on the reports that were submitted by Head Start programs operating in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.



### Diaper Time Is Talk Time Tips

Too Small to Fail and the National Diaper Bank Network released new *Diaper Time Is Talk Time* tips and information to help boost children's early brain and language development during everyday moments, like diaper time.



### Segregation at an Early Age

This [report](#) analyzes children enrolled in school-based preschool programs. It uses several measures to assess the segregation of preschool students and describes national trends. There are a range of potential social benefits from early exposure to diversity for students from all racial and economic backgrounds.

*Continued on page 13*



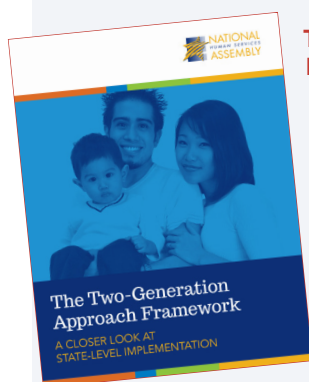


## Additional Resources

Continued from page 12

### National Women's Law Center Factsheet

The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) released a [factsheet](#) on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and child care programs. NWLC calls on the Federal and State governments to make increased investments and to improve policies so that vulnerable families have help in being able to afford high-quality child care that enables parents to work and that encourages children's healthy development and learning.



### Two-Generation Approach Framework

The two-generation approach builds well-being by working with families to create a solid and stable foundation through integrated, intensive, and high-quality services in four areas of focus: (1) early childhood education, (2) elementary education, (3) economic stability, and (4) family engagement. You can read the report at [this Web site](#).

### Impact of North Carolina's Early Childhood Programs and Policies on Educational Outcomes in Elementary School

Research from the [Duke Center for Child and Family Policy](#), published in [Child Development](#), looked at more than 1 million North Carolina public school students born between 1988 and 2000. Researchers asked whether the State's Smart Start and More at Four programs had provided longlasting benefits for children or if previously seen positive results had diminished by the end of elementary school.

The researchers found that the programs' benefits did not fade with time, as with some early childhood intervention programs; instead, the positive effects grew or held steady over the years.

### 2016 Citizen-Readiness Index Released

The Council for a Strong America released its [2016 Citizen-Readiness Index](#), with individual grades for States on how well they prepare children for success in school, work, and life. This three-part report sheds light on this "citizen-readiness" issue across the country. Parts 1, 2, and 3 present concrete steps that Congress and the next President can take in 2017 to strengthen families, advance early education, and create healthier schools—solutions that can help America address its citizen-readiness problem. An [infographic](#) highlights key State-specific data on citizen readiness for each State.

### Policy Report From the Education Commission of the States

This new policy report from Education Commission of the States, [Free Community College: An approach to increase adult student success in postsecondary education](#), discusses the growing interest in free community college policies across State legislatures; addresses the limited potential of current policies to help States reach their completion and attainment goals; and offers a new, inclusive framework for including adult students in free community college policies.



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

### National Head Start Association

On September 1, 2016, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

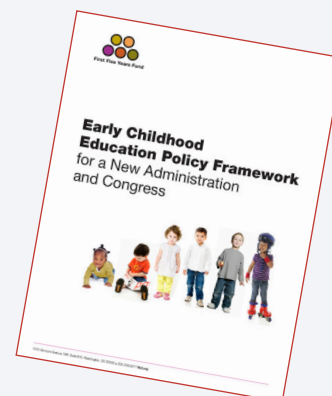
released a Final Rule implementing new Head Start Program Performance Standards. In the Final Rule, one of the significant and positive changes was the extended duration of services. The benefits of increased access to full-day, full-school-year early learning services are significant. Full-day programming prepares children for different types of school settings as they get older. [Evidence](#) shows that participants in full-day Head Start programs perform better in the areas of language, math, social-emotional development, and physical health when compared with their part-day programming peers.

[Additional evidence](#) shows that nonwhite, Hispanic students in full-day kindergarten perform significantly better than their peers in a half-day program, as do full-day kindergartners who are eligible for a free or reduced lunch. Phased in over the next 5 years, Head Start programs will transition to provide at least 1,020 annual hours of planned class operations over at least 8 months for all center-based enrollees. This policy marks an important step forward in providing the Nation's most vulnerable children with a clear window of opportunity.

### Recommendations From the First Five Years Fund

The First Five Years Fund (FFYF) released its [policy framework recommendations](#) for the new Administration and Congress.

In addition, FFYF released a new video, [Plan on Solutions](#), which highlights the unparalleled importance of reaching children as early in their lives as possible and highlights opportunities for policymakers to ensure that children from birth through age 5 have access to high-quality early learning and care.



REPORT CARD ON FOOD SECURITY AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN IN 2015

## HIDDEN FOOD STRESS

UNDERREPORTED IN NATIONAL DATA:

FAMILIES STRESSED ABOUT AFFORDING ENOUGH FOOD  
AT RISK FOR POOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Many families across the country experience stress over whether or not they will have enough resources to feed their families, technically known as "marginal food security." We refer to marginal food security as "hidden food stress." Those who are marginally food-secure worry about having consistent access to healthy food whereas food-secure families are confident that they have access to enough quality food. Though they are categorized as food secure in national datasets, research demonstrates that families that fall into the marginally food secure category actually face health risks similar to those faced by families experiencing food insecurity.

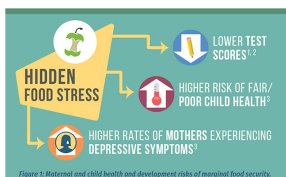


Figure 1: Maternal and child health and development risks of marginal food security.

Compared to fully food-secure families with children, health risks for marginally food-secure families include:<sup>3</sup>

CHILDREN ARE 56% —MORE LIKELY TO BE— IN FAIR OR POOR HEALTH  
MOTHERS ARE ALMOST 3X —MORE LIKELY TO HAVE— DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS  
CHILDREN ARE 60% —MORE LIKELY TO BE— AT DEVELOPMENTAL RISK

## New Report Card Series: Food Security Among Young Children

The recent *Report Card on Food Insecurity Among Young Children in 2015*, from *Children's HealthWatch*, noted that food security is affected by changes in the economy (i.e., fluctuations in employment, food, housing, energy, and transportation costs) and by Federal/State policy, particularly changes to the structure or benefit level of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is the Nation's largest nutrition program.



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

To sign up to receive this newsletter, please e-mail [marsha.basloe@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:marsha.basloe@acf.hhs.gov) and include the subject line "Early Childhood Development Newsletter."

If you have questions or comments regarding the newsletter, please contact [marsha.basloe@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:marsha.basloe@acf.hhs.gov).

For more information on the Office of Early Childhood Development at ACF, visit [this Web site](http://www.acf.hhs.gov).

The Early Childhood Development newsletter contains links to other Web sites and news articles. These links represent just a few examples of the numerous reference materials currently available to the public. The opinions expressed in any articles or on Web pages do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The inclusion of resources should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement of any private organization or business listed herein.



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